Project Abstract (21-089) Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET)

**Project Title:** Rural Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care Training Program  
**Applicant Organization Name:** University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine; School of Social Work  
**Address:** 5770 Social Work Bldg, Orono, ME 04469-5770  
**Project Director Name:** Sandra Butler  
**Contact Phone Number:** 207-581-2382  
**Email Address:** sbutler@maine.edu  
**Website Address:** https://umaine.edu/socialwork/

**List all grant program funds requested in the application, if applicable:** $1,480,385  
**Funding priority and preference:** The applicant requests funding priority and high rate funding preference for the proposed project, following evidence of eligibility provided in Attachment 12.

The University of Maine (UMaine) Rural Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care (RIBHPC) Training Program requests $1,512,218 to support an effort that will help address behavioral health care needs in rural Maine. Through partnerships with practices and agencies in high need areas, as well as targeted, team-based training, RIBHPC will prepare Master’s of Social Work (MSW) and Clinical Psychology Doctoral (PhD) student trainees for careers in rural integrated behavioral health. Experiential learning and supplemental curriculum for 87 trainees will increase their competencies in integrated behavioral health, as well as their potential for securing careers in rural, integrated and/or primary care settings. Stipend support during trainees’ final clinical practicum year will help ease their educational cost burden, which can be a barrier to program completion, particularly for disadvantaged students.

The need-inspired goals of the RIBHPC training program are: 1) to expand relationships with community partners to increase access to high quality integrated behavioral health services in rural Maine; 2) to develop a collaborative training model for team-based integrated behavioral health care in primary care settings for social work and psychology graduate education; and 3) to develop a diverse pool of social work and psychology health care professionals interested and prepared to work in high needs areas of rural Maine. Project goals will be achieved through three interrelated strands of activities: 1) graduate curriculum tied to integrated behavioral health; 2) experiential learning in integrated settings; and 3) an Interprofessional Continuing Education Series for faculty, staff, clinical supervisors, and trainees. Project personnel from the UMaine School of Social Work and Department of Psychology will work closely with new and existing clinical partners in Maine to provide didactic and experiential learning through which MSW and PhD trainees will develop the professional skills needed to function effectively in integrated health care teams. Education and training will emphasize specific needs of rural populations including behavioral health care of adolescents and young adults in transition in primary care settings, trauma-informed care, and contemporary telehealth practice.

Funding priority is requested, as both the MSW and clinical psychology programs have substantial evidence demonstrating an ability to train and place graduates in integrated healthcare settings. Funding preference is also requested for the proposed training program, based on evidence showing a high rate (>50%) of MSW and PhD graduate placements in medically underserved communities.